

October 1, 2017

WHAT WE HEARD

Inform Yo'Self: Edmonton Municipal Election 2017

On September 18, 2017, interVivos hosted a non-partisan event to better inform Edmonton's young professionals on the issues that matter to them in the upcoming municipal election. The event featured small groups and expert panel members discussing transit, homelessness and housing, residential infill, diversity on council and safe injection sites.

Learn more about how these topics were selected at <http://intervivos.ca/2017/09/10/what-matters-to-edmontons-young-professionals/>.

Hear why the panelists feel their topic of interest is important to young professional in Edmonton at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pC2tdDgJJ3g&t=1s>.

Panelists

Transit

Christopher Chan, Executive Director, [Edmonton Bicycle Commuters Society](#)

Manish Shirgaokar, Assistant Professor, [Urban and Regional Planning, University of Alberta](#)

Homelessness and Housing

Susan McGee, CEO, [Homeward Trust](#)

Larry Scarbeau, Executive Director, [Metis Capital Housing Corporation](#)

Residential Infill

Nola Kilmartin, Senior Urban Planner, [Kennedy](#)

Tegan Martin-Drysdale, Vice President, [Infill Development in Edmonton Association](#)

Diversity on Council

Lana Cuthbertson, Chair, [Equal Voice Northern Alberta](#)

Genna DiPinto, Chair, [Edmonton Youth Council](#)

Safe Injection Sites

Marliss Taylor, Program Manager, [Streetworks Program](#)

Nathan Ip, President, [Edmonton Chinese Young Leaders Association](#)

1. TRANSIT

A. Summary of Discussion

- For a major city, Edmonton is one of the least dense. This creates challenges when trying to implement an efficient, cost-effective transit system.
- Participants discussed options for making Edmonton more pedestrian friendly. Panelists pointed to the examples of Denmark and Copenhagen, which have already created climate controlled walkways – could that work in Edmonton?
- Discussion of the downtown bike grid is part of a complete transportation network meant to solve issues like congestion downtown and improve quality of life for Edmontonians.
- The issue of transit forces cities to ask themselves big questions like “Who are we as a city? What do we need? What can we afford and what could work here?”
- Discussed the idea that express bus routes may be more effective and cost efficient than LRT expansion.

B. More about This Issue

- <http://www.metronews.ca/news/edmonton/2017/07/12/downtown-edmonton-businesses-weigh-in-on-new-bike-grid.html>
- <http://edmontonjournal.com/news/politics/david-staples-bridge-bike-lane-brings-construction-hell-to-glenora-businesses>
- <http://edmontonjournal.com/news/local-news/edmonton-looks-at-cutbacks-fare-increase-for-route-747-airport-bus>
- <http://www.metronews.ca/news/edmonton/2017/08/24/edmonton-s-transit-network-receives-b-grade-on-new-report-card.html>

2. HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING

A. Summary of Discussion

- Chronic homelessness is shrinking while episodic homelessness (2-3 months) has increased.
- Change perceptions. Educate how affordable housing options are good for communities.
- How to support LGBT youth – social change, training and communications at shelters, inclusion.
- Groups discussed ways in which they could help with the homelessness situation in Edmonton. Suggestions included volunteering for Habitat for Humanity but also acting as or finding champions in your community to advocate for the homeless.

B. More about This Issue

- <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/edmonton-homeless-mayor-iveson-homewardtrust-council-city-1.4276055>
- <http://edmontonjournal.com/news/local-news/live-homeward-trust-calls-for-surge-in-housing-work-to-end-homelessness>
- <http://www.metronews.ca/news/calgary/2017/09/01/housing-and-homeless-guidelines-for-lgbtq2s-youth-released-by-alberta-government.html>
- <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/homeless-edmonton-bissell-centre-scott-mckeen-1.3991563>

3. RESIDENTIAL INFILL

A. Summary of Discussion

- Participants wanted to know how infill could be made more affordable. Two-thirds of residents can't afford a \$360,000 average-priced home and most infill homes are listed well above that.
 - Reasons for infill cost being so high include: not developing infill in bulk, land cost in mature neighborhoods, time, permits and zoning bylaws.
- Residential infill is important for the next generation of home owners.

B. More about This Issue

- <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/infill-edmonton-sarah-eadie-1.4138807>
- <https://www.cityofedmontoninfill.ca/>
- <http://www.edmontonsun.com/2017/08/31/councillor-who-built-skinny-homes-finds-infill-too-expensive-to-sell-in-edmonton>
- <http://www.metronews.ca/news/edmonton/2017/08/29/infill-on-the-way-city-to-start-sending-letters-to-neighbours.html>

4. DIVERSITY ON COUNCIL

A. Summary of Discussion

- Participants felt that the lack of diverse representation makes Edmontonians feel disconnected from the city – no one understands them or represents their needs of the needs of their communities.
- Calling for diversity does not have to be “trendy tokenism.”
- Lowering the voting age to 16 may help increase diversity and voter turnout while also creating life-long voters by engaging at an early age.
- Groups discussed the ways in which barriers to voting or running for election may be negatively impacting diversity and ideas for how we change this as a city (e.g. limits to how much candidates can fund raise).

B. More about This Issue

- <http://edmontonjournal.com/news/local-news/helping-women-find-their-political-feet-equal-voice-launches-push-to-recruit-women-for-edmonton-council-race>
- <http://globalnews.ca/news/3689004/10-week-parental-leave-approved-by-edmonton-city-councillors/>
- <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/youth-council-narrowly-wins-council-endorsement-to-lobby-for-lower-voting-age-1.3733192>

5. SAFE INJECTION SITES

A. Summary of Discussion

- While there was general agreement with the intention behind them, participants recognized the challenges with implementing safe injection sites.
- Groups discussed the concerns of the Chinese community regarding the placement of the sites and whether the community and local businesses were sufficiently consulted.
- Evidence suggests that only 20% of deaths caused by injections happen in the inner city – should we be looking at other neighbourhoods to place safe injection sites?
- The plan is to start in the downtown core and then expand into other communities.

B. More about This Issue

- <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/chinese-community-challenges-city-hall-on-safe-injection-sites-1.4279492>
- <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/injection-addict-drug-supervised-edmonton-council-mccauley-boyle-1.4096057>
- <http://www.edmontonsun.com/2017/06/17/anger-over-concentration-of-safe-injection-sites-in-inner-city-edmonton>
- <http://edmontonjournal.com/news/local-news/researchers-outline-plan-to-study-impact-of-edmontons-safe-injection-sites>
- <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/edmonton-alberta-supervised-injection-1.4271096>